

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A protection switching arrangement for optical switching systems comprising:
a plurality of optical switching matrices having multiple inputs and multiple
5 outputs and being operable to optical channel signals from any one of a plurality of the inputs to any one of a plurality of the outputs;
a plurality of wavelength division demultiplexers coupled at its outputs to the inputs of the plurality of optical switching matrices for dividing a composite optical signal into optical channel signals and providing each optical channel signal to a
10 corresponding optical switching matrix;
a spare wavelength division demultiplexers coupled at its outputs to the inputs of the plurality of optical switching matrices for dividing a composite optical signal into optical channel signals; and
at least one optical protection switch having a plurality of inputs and a plurality
15 of straight-through outputs and at least one protection output and coupled at each of its straight-through outputs to an input of a respective one of the plurality of wavelength division demultiplexers and coupled at its protection output the inputs of the spare wavelength division de-multiplexer.
- 20 3. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 1 wherein the optical protection switch is a $1 \times N$ MEMS switch where the switch matrices have N inputs.
4. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 1 wherein the optical protection switch is a $2 \times N$ MEMS switch where the switch matrices have N inputs, and
25 one column of mirrors in the MEMS is used for protection switching.
5. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 1 wherein the optical protection switch is a $2 \times N$ MEMS switch where the switch matrices have N inputs, and one column of mirrors in the MEMS is used for testing.
- 30 6. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 1 wherein the optical protection switch is a $3 \times N$ MEMS switch where the switch matrices have N inputs.
7. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 1 wherein the optical
35 protection switch is a $3 \times N$ MEMS switch where the switch matrices have N inputs, and one column of mirrors in the MEMS is used for protection switching.

8. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 1 wherein the optical protection switch is a $3 \times N$ MEMS switch where the switch matrices have N inputs, and one column of mirrors in the MEMS is used for testing.

5 9. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 1 wherein the optical protection switch is a $3 \times N$ MEMS switch where the switch matrices have N inputs, and either of two columns of mirrors in the MEMS is used for protection switching.

10 10. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 1 wherein the optical channels are lambdas.

11. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 1 further comprising a plurality of optical protection switches corresponding to the plurality of wavelength division demultiplexers, each optical protection switch coupled at its outputs to the
15 inputs of the plurality of optical switching matrices and coupled at its inputs to the outputs of the corresponding wavelength division de-multiplexers.

12. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 11 wherein the optical protection switches are $1 \times M$ MEMS switches where there are M switch matrices.

20 13. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 11 wherein the optical protection switches are $2 \times M$ MEMS switches where there are M switch matrices, and one column of mirrors in the MEMS is used for protection switching.

25 14. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 11 wherein the optical protection switches are $2 \times M$ MEMS switches where there are M switch matrices, and one column of mirrors in the MEMS is used for testing the switching matrices.

30 15. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 11 wherein the optical protection switches are $3 \times M$ MEMS switches where there are M switch matrices.

35 16. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 11 wherein the optical protection switches are $3 \times M$ MEMS switches where there are M switch matrices, and one column of mirrors in the MEMS is used for protection switching.

17. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 11 wherein the optical protection switches are $3 \times M$ MEMS switches where there are M switch matrices, and one column of mirrors in the MEMS is used for testing the switching matrices.
- 5 18. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 11 wherein the optical protection switches are $3 \times M$ MEMS switches where there are M switch matrices, and either of two columns of mirrors in the MEMS is used for protection switching.
19. A protection switching arrangement as claimed in claim 11 wherein the optical
10 channels are lambdas.
20. A protection switching arrangement comprising
a first logical layer for switching optical channels;
a second logical layer for switching a group of optical channels; and
15 a first coupler for grouping together optical channels of the first logical layer and coupling them to the second logical layer;
a second coupler for ungrouping grouped optical channels of the second logical layer and coupling them to the first logical layer
a first protection switch providing an alternative switch path for at least one of
20 the grouped optical channels from the first logical layer in the second logical layer.
21. A protection arrangement as claimed in claim 20 further comprising a second protection switch providing an alternative switch path for at least one of the optical channels from the second logical layer in the first logical layer.
- 25 22. A protection switching arrangement for optical switching systems comprising an optical protection switch including:
a first column of deployable mirrors, each mirror operable for deflecting an optical signal from an optical signal input path to a protection path; and
30 a second column of deployable mirrors, each mirror operable for deflecting an optical test signal from an optical test signal input path to an optical switch testing path;
wherein for each mirror of the first column and corresponding mirror of the second column, the respective optical signal input path and optical switch test path are substantially aligned.
- 35 23. A protection arrangement as claimed in claim 22 wherein the first and second columns of mirrors are formed as faces of a deployable prism.

24. A protection switching arrangement for optical switching systems comprising an optical protection switch including:

- a first column of deployable mirrors, each mirror operable for deflecting an optical signal from an optical signal input path to a protection path;
 - a second column of deployable mirrors, each mirror operable for deflecting an optical test signal from an optical test signal input path to an optical switch testing path; and
 - a third column of deployable mirrors, each mirror operable for deflecting an optical signal from an optical signal input path to a protection path;
- wherein for each mirror of the first and third column and corresponding mirror of the second column, the respective optical signal input path and optical switch test path are substantially aligned.

25. A protection arrangement as claimed in claim 24 wherein the first and second columns of mirrors are formed as faces of a deployable prism.